

THE SHIRETOWN CONSERVER

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society Newsletter

Volume VII, Number 4

Winter 2003-4

If Only He Could Talk By Louis Stevens

Over one hundred years of brutal winters, sweltering summers, two world wars, Memorial Day exercises at his feet, many changes in Monument Square, fires, horse-drawn wagons becoming powerful logging trucks, and seeing the old FA wooden building razed - that's only a partial list of what the Civil War statue here has witnessed during this century as sentry over the Square. Dedication ceremonies were held 110 years ago on Saturday, October 21, 1893. Despite his age, he willingly consented to be interviewed.

Do I remember the big day? Of course! No one, not even a statue, forgets his birth date when he reaches my age. I was the child, I suppose you could say, of a rich man from Abbot named Peleg Washburn. He paid for my creation from granite. I have some nearby older brothers in Abbot and Dexter.



Photo By Jack Battick

It was easy for me to imagine all those 300 Civil War veterans who would come to march, polishing up their insignia, and giving their old uniforms one final brushing. All the five Grand Army of the Republic posts in the county sent representatives. A great crowd of nearly 2,000 folks started to assemble here early in the morning. By ten, the parade of bands and veterans, many of them finding it more and more difficult to keep in quick march step to the martial music, was formed in the street before me, ready to march down Lincoln, over the Dover bridge, and back here by way of Main Street, then up North to Winter, and return here again by Main. (Continued on page 7)

Inside This Issue

Aunt Hannah's Hill	Page 2
Long Journey Home	Page 3
Directors' Meeting	Page 4
The Society's Unknown	Page 5
Cataloging our Collection	Page 6
Madelyn Betts Resigning as Secretary	Page 11
Dues To Rise Next Year	Page 11

Aunt Hannah's Hill By Madelyn C. Betts

Editor's Note: Those of us born before 1960 know where Aunt Hannah's Hill is. In this piece Madelyn tells us how that name came about and something about the people who settled Essex Street when it was farmland.

The Cofren-Cochrane family originated in Ayr, Ayrshire, Scotland. Many of the descendants emigrated and settled in New Hampshire, and then located to Vienna, Maine. One of these descendants, Benjamin Cofren, born November 15, 1797, married Hannah Stevens of New Brunswick. They settled in Foxcroft (part of the farm was in Dover) at the top of the hill on what is now Essex Street. Benjamin was killed June 28, 1847.

Benjamin's brother, Sewall, born June 15, 1799, added to the farm land a triangular piece bordered by the river, the town line, and Essex Street. On this piece was a large two story house in which the Cofren family first lived. The house was razed many years ago and Mr. Cofren had by then moved his family to the house built across the Foxcroft line, now the low rambling residence with ell, sheds, and stable, on Essex Street. Mr. Cofren owned the grist mill near the Brown Woolen Mill and was himself an expert miller. It must have been Sewall Cofren's children who bestowed the name "Aunt Hannah's Hill" upon the rising ground surrounding Essex Street.

Sewall's daughter, Elizabeth Merrill Cofren, married Dr. James B. Cochrane in 1865. Elizabeth and James shared a common ancestry, but the Rev. James Cofren introduced a new



BRIDGE ON PISCATAQUIS RIVER, DOVER, ME.

Early postcard showing Dover Bridge with Aunt Hannah's hill in the background.

spelling of the old name.

Dr. Cochrane was born March 23, 1833 in Fayette, Maine. A graduate of Bowdoin and Albany Medical College, he practiced medicine for many years and served as Civil War pension examining surgeon from 1882 to 1894. Eventually the doctor gave up the practice of medicine for farming the family land.

According to an item in the *Piscataquis Observer* in 1889, Dr. Cochrane sub-divided his property to the northwest of "Aunt Hannah's Hill", laying out house lots in what became the block between Union Street and Fairview Avenue on the west and east, and Depot and Summer Streets, north and south. Each lot was to be five rods (82.5 feet) wide by eight rods (132 feet) deep, with similar lots laid out on the west side of Union Street as well as on that portion of Fairview Avenue north of the present fairgrounds. At that time the land which became the fairgrounds was owned by the Bangor and Piscataquis Railroad. A wooded one acre lot between Fairview Avenue and Union Street just north of Lincoln Street then known as "Cochrane's grove" he proposed to deed to the town of Foxcroft for a public park. (Continued on page 6)

Long Journey Home By Estella Bennett

Sometimes you find the most interesting items in the most unusual places! Several years ago Dan Connors of Sebec, a Moosehead Manufacturing employee at the time, brought in an old trunk he was going to make into a tool box. Knowing how much I loved antiques and historical items I was told about the trunk, probably to Dan's chagrin as it turned out.

Stenciled on the outside of the trunk was Edw. W. Hinks, USA and a shipping tag was on the side which read: "Gen'l Edw W. Hincks. Battle St. Cambridge, MASS."

Since we had a name and residence I was fairly confident we could find the history of the owner and Dan agreed to hold off his conversion until I could learn more about Edward Hinks. With the help of my history-loving husband and the Internet we found that Mr. Hinks was a prominent Civil War hero. This is a portion of the story we received from the Cambridge Historical Society located in the former home of Edward Hinks at 159 Brattle Street in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Edward Ward Hinks was born in Bucksport, Maine on May 30, 1830, the youngest of three children. Tragedy first fell across his path when he was barely 7 months old. His father, like his father before him, was a sailor and in January 1831 he was lost at sea. The young Edward remained in Bucksport but broke the family tradition of seafaring and became an apprentice printer in Bangor at the age of 15. After four years at the Whig and Courier he chose to move to Boston and continued in the printing and publishing business while studying law. He became a representative in the State legislature and librarian of the Lynn Library Association.

Edward's life took an eventful turn when in 1859 he took the position of adjutant of the 8th Massachusetts militia. Late the next year when



The historic General Edward W. Hinks trunk rescued from destruction. Photo courtesy of the author.

he received news of the attack on Fort Moultrie, he wrote volunteering his command to serve in the defense of his country. Hinks didn't have to wait long for on April 15, 1861 he traveled to Boston and personally urged Governor Andrew to accept the 8th Regiment as part of the contingent of 1,500 men called for by President Lincoln. His offer was accepted and that evening Hinks rode to Lynn, Salem, Beverly, and Marblehead notifying the various companies of his regiment to rendezvous the following morning for instant duty. They were the first troops in the country en route to the war.

The 8th Regiment had been commissioned for 90 days and was mustered out on August 1. Hinks then took command of the 19th Massachusetts which he ran with discipline, although he was popular with both troops and fellow officers. Personal tragedy struck Edward Hinks when his 5 year old son, Anson, died. Hinks' wife, Annie, died later that summer in part from grief at the death of their only son.

The demands of the war left little time for mourning and Hinks' Regiment took an active role in the siege of Yorktown. Hinks was wounded during the period from a musket ball through his right thigh. He recovered in time to (continued on page 9)

Society Accepting Items

The Society is accepting donations of items pertaining to the history, culture, and genealogy of the greater Dover-Foxcroft area. All donors will receive a receipt with an estimated value of the donation which is eligible as a tax deduction. Among items being sought are photos, class yearbooks, diaries, letters, programs of social events, minutes of clubs or groups, historical clothing, etc.

The Society would be pleased to have a copy of your family genealogy for our archives.

The Society will also accept significant collections on permanent loan.

To donate an item please contact Mary Annis or Nancy Battick. To arrange a permanent loan please contact Jack Battick. Dave Lockwood should be contacted if you have an item suitable for the Blacksmith Shop.

Directors' Meeting

The Board of Directors met recently and considered several items of business. Among business accomplished were:

Accepted an acquisition and deaccessioning policy. The Board will act as the deaccessioning committee.

Decided to place an acceptable DOT sign on South Street indicating the Observer Museum's location. Dave Lockwood volunteered to make a suitable sign.

Voted to expand the Observer Building Museum's hours to include part of Friday.

The Directors also decided that members in arrears with their dues will no longer receive the *Shiretown Conserver*.

Book Sale To Be Repeated

Those of you who were able to visit the Museum during Homecoming will remember we had a book sale. Due to its success we have decided to hold another sale this year. If you have books you'd like to donate (all donations are tax deductible) please let Mary Annis or Nancy Battick know. This year's sale netted over \$200 for the Society so we hope to be as successful in 2004.

New Members

Jo Eaton	Benton
William Allen	Ellsworth

Our Corporate Sponsors

Ellen Anderson, D.P.M.
Dexter Regional Federal Credit Union
Dover-Foxcroft Chiropractic Services
Lary Funeral Home
Northeast Publishing
Rowell's Garage
Mark Stitham, M.D.

Thank You!

Honor Your Civil War Past

A new tent of the Daughters of Union Veterans named for Dover's own Sarah Elizabeth Palmer, a Civil War nurse [See *Conserver* Autumn 2001], is being formed. If you're a direct descendant of a Civil War veteran and would like to know more about joining this group please contact Nancy Battick. You do not need to live in Maine nor does your ancestor need to have served in a Maine regiment.

The Society's Unknown

These charming beach scenes were likely taken in San Diego in 1927 and were found in an envelope addressed to Mrs. Charles Washburn. There is no identification of the people in the photos. Can you help us out? If you recognize anyone or know more about these photos please contact Nancy Battick.



It Isn't Your Town, It's You

If you want to live in the kind of a town
Like the kind of a town you like,
You needn't slip your clothes in a grip
And start on a long, long hike.

You'll only find what you left behind,
For there's nothing that's really new;
It's a knock at yourself when you knock your
town. It isn't your town - it's you.

Real towns are not made by man afraid
Lest somebody else gets ahead;
When everyone works and nobody shirks
You can raise a town from the dead

And if, while you make a personal stake,
Your neighbor can make one, too,
Your town will be what you want to see -
It isn't your town - its YOU!

Piscataquis Observer
January 1, 1924

Aunt Hannah's Hill (Continued from page 2)

Elizabeth Cochrane died December 14, 1918. According to local legend Dr. Cochrane hung himself in the barn of his home on February 27, 1923. He was 89 and had no near relatives. Today, the early Cochrane home on Lincoln Street is owned by Clair and Kathy Hall.

Editor's Note: Material for this piece is drawn from *Old Foxcroft* by Dr. Mary Chandler Lowell and the *Piscataquis Observer*.

Cataloging of Collection Begins

The long-needed cataloging of our collection is underway. Mary Annis and Leilani Stikes are devoting one day each week to work at creating a comprehensive catalog of all items currently displayed downstairs in the Observer Building Museum.

Nancy Battick is working on creating an index of all photos in the Museum collection as well as an every-name index of identified individuals in all photos. This work has been going on since last spring. She is also archiving the photo collection and placing all photos in acid-free, archival sheets for preservation. The photos are then placed in ring binders with numbered pages and a master index is created to aid in locating photos of events, people, and places. Larger unframed photos will be archivally preserved and placed in a special folio drawer. Many framed photos will remain in their original frames at this time.

Also, in the works is the archiving and preservation of the Society's extensive document collection. The Society has a far ranging collection including items such as town reports, original manuscripts and diaries, letters, vital records, and court records to name a few. A comprehensive index of all of these documents is also underway.

This work began in the spring and will continue until done. Eventually the Society hopes to allow researchers to access documents and photos. There is a great deal of valuable genealogical material in our collection as well as general historical items.

If you are able to help with any of the cataloging work please contact Mary Annis or Nancy Battick. Preserving this priceless heritage is our goal and any help will be most welcome.

Ghoulies & Ghosties

At the Society's last meeting on October members exchanged ghost stories that had occurred in the area, in families, and in the State of Maine in general. It was a fun evening and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Next Year's Programs

Soon Mary Annis will begin scheduling programs for next year's Society meetings. Do you have time to help her or a suggestion for a possible program? Locating and arranging entertaining and informative programs is a great deal of work and Mary would appreciate your input and assistance. Please contact her if you can help out.

Foxcroft Brand Salted Peanuts!

BEST PEANUTS ON THE MARKET TO-DAY



1,000 BAGS A DAY.

They go TO BOSTON and Not FROM BOSTON to Foxcroft. Look for Them! They are put up in Glassine Bags.

Monument Sq., CARLL FOXCROFT, ME.

Academy Review, 1909

If Only He Could Talk (continued from page 1)

Then came the formal dedication and I must admit it was most impressive even if I was the object of attention. The tremendous throng of people formed a huge square around me, listening intently to the speeches, which ended just in time for a great dinner, served to 700 in the old Opera House across the square.

Then more ceremonies in the House, attended by 1,200. I couldn't hear that, of course, but by then it seemed to me that, like so many years before when I first entered the army, I was on sentry duty as I have remained ever since.

Where did I come from? Over in Dexter at Morse & Bridges, makers of monuments and tablets, and I believe I cost about \$2,000, a lot of money for that time.

Changes I've seen? Many here in the Square and most of them, unfortunately caused by fires.



Sentry's eye view of the Opera House and part of Monument Square. D-F Historical Society collection.

The worst was the destruction of the Opera House that cold New Year's eve on December 31, 1935. The building was only a year old

when I arrived here, so I got to see most of its lifetime: all the fine stores on the first floor with colorful striped awnings to protect the goods in the windows from fading in the summer sun, the restaurant underneath where the fire started, the offices on the second floor, and the spacious auditorium on the third where dances and movies were held.

All the other buildings around the Square vanished to crowbars, wrecking crews, or were leveled by bulldozers, like the old Exchange Hotel just across the way where the gas station is now. Then the block of stores, apartments, and the drug store were leveled for parking spaces for a grocery store - er, supermarket as you call it today.

But it's the old wooden Academy Building that I miss the most. I remember how it would come alive every September with students and faculty coming up the walk. There were a couple of years at the end of the first World War when school didn't start until November so the boys could work on the farms to harvest potatoes. They were supposed to start on November 11 in 1918 but the armistice was signed and what a celebration then. And another when the next war ended.

I saw many renovations at the school as the enrollment increased over the years. The Mayo family paid for the new portico entrance with the nice columns and the wide steps. Goodness knows how many photographs of classes, choirs, athletic teams, and different school groups I've seen taken on those steps.

(Continued on page 8)

If Only He Could Talk (continued from page 7)

I especially remember the great celebration the school and town had for the cross-country team and runner Lloyd Blethen when they won the national prep school championship in 1942. I recall players from the early football teams heading for practice at the old field inside the racetrack on Park Street, and later teams jogging their way down Lincoln to the field at the fairgrounds. How they would ring the bell if they won! It's great to know the same bell is still clanged at the new school whenever a team is victorious.

One time the school had to be evacuated because a smoldering fire started in the coal bin and smoke filled the building. I thought we were going to lose another structure to fire, but it was saved, only to be torn down many years later in the 1960's when it was no longer needed. Too bad it was not kept for some sort of museum folks could visit. So many things from the old days could have been preserved, but got torn down and replaced by another parking lot.

Changes for the better? Let's see. Over the years I got accustomed to the booming of the town clock every hour, but I do like the carillon now with its bells and songs, especially "Onward Christian Soldiers". Nice of Mr. Evans to leave money to purchase it. For many years I would see him coming to the Congregational Church to practice playing the

organ for Sunday a.m. services.

The differences in travel? Well, not much. Then it was just one or two horse power, and now a couple of hundred or more in cars and trucks. I saw more smash-ups in the days of horses than I ever have with vehicles - lots of runaway horses, drivers speeding up and down Main to show off their horses like teenagers squeal tires today to impress folks. Same type of human nature, just different ways of showing it.

Unusual sights I'll never forget? Well, the big roller pulled by horses to pack down snow for sleds and sleighs before the days of plows. And herds of cattle stopping on their way through town for a drink of water from the trough that stood in the square and is now filled with flowers during the summer. And the water sprinkler that kept down the dust before the roads were tarred, the circus parades with

elephants, the band concerts at the long-gone stand on the Academy lawn. And, all the fancy carriages and surreys, and horses, especially those pairs of Mr. Mayo. He owned the mill and could afford the best.

Parades and celebrations? So many I couldn't even recall them all. Some do come to mind such as the Centennial in 1923, the Memorial Day observances when there were still Civil War Veterans who mustered here before they marched to the Foxcroft Cemetery.
(Continued on page 9)



Photo by Elmer R. Blethen, Jeweler.
Foxcroft Academy, Foxcroft, Maine
"It's the old wooden Academy Building I miss." D-F Historical Society collection.

If Only He Could Talk (Continued from page 8)

How much longer will I live? Many years, I hope. I get plenty of fresh air and sun, keep the same weight so I can get into my old uniform every day, keep my rifle clean except during a heavy winter storm, and I have never used tobacco or alcohol.

Note: This piece is drawn from excerpts of an article first published in the *Eastern Gazette* and is reprinted through their courtesy.

Long Journey Home (continued from page 3)

lead his troops at the Battle of Antietam where he was nearly killed. Every field officer in the 19th Regiment was either killed or wounded at Antietam. Hinks sustained a wound through the right arm, resulting in a compound fracture, and more dangerous, a wound directly through his abdomen. Miraculously, he survived and learned later his obituary had been run in a Boston newspaper.

As he recuperated at home, Hinks met Elizabeth Nichols and the two were married before Hinks again returned to battle. Hinks was placed at the head of the Third Division of the 18th Army, a division of colored troops. Their hour of triumph came in mid-June 1864 when Grant made a surprise attack on Petersburg, a vitally important railroad center just below Richmond. It was later reported that "no nobler effort has been put forth today, and no greater success achieved than that of the colored troops." Petersburg was the last major engagement Hinks fought.

His wife Lillie had borne him a daughter, Bessie, but at age 19 she accidentally stepped on a 4th of July firecracker and died when her dress caught in flames. Hink's Lillie never recovered

from the tragedy and became an invalid, dying within a few years.

Hinks, perhaps to counter his grief, became extraordinarily active in the affairs of the city. For the last 2 years of his life he lived alone, suffering in pain from his Civil War wounds. On February 14, 1894 he died.

When Dan Connors learned the history of the Hinks trunk he and his wife donated it to the Cambridge Historical Society who showered him with thanks for not turning this wonderful memorabilia of history into a tool box.

Editor's Note: Estella "Tootie" Bennett is president of the Monson Historical Society and on the board of the Abbot Historical Society, as well as belonging to the D-F Society. She and her husband, Wayne, live in Guilford.

HELP!

Throughout this issue of the *Conservator* we've mentioned the need for people to help us continue the work of the Museums and their collections. Here's a recap of areas we can use assistance (if you've ever felt no one needs you, believe me, we do).

Programs: Assist Mary Annis.

Cataloging: the collection at the Observer Bldg.

Handy Helpers: Upstairs at the Observer Building Museum, cleaning, making storage shelves, organizing archival space and work areas.

Picking Up: donations of books and other items.

Web site: We'd like to have one for the Society and our museums, but need people to explore servers and do the physical work. Can you help?

Exhibits. It's not too soon to think of next season and some extra hands would be welcome.

Fundraising. The Society would like to do more with this but time and people are needed. Can you help us out?

Editor's Corner

Again, I must thank all of you who have indicated to me how much you enjoy the *Conservator*. Please keep letting me know your suggestions, comments, and criticisms.

For contributing to this issue I want to give a formal tip of the editor's hat to

Mary Annis, Estella "Tootie" Bennett, Madelyn C. Betts, Louis Stevens, and Jack Battick.

If you have something you'd like to share with your fellow Society members please don't be shy. You can e-mail me at battick@midmaine.com

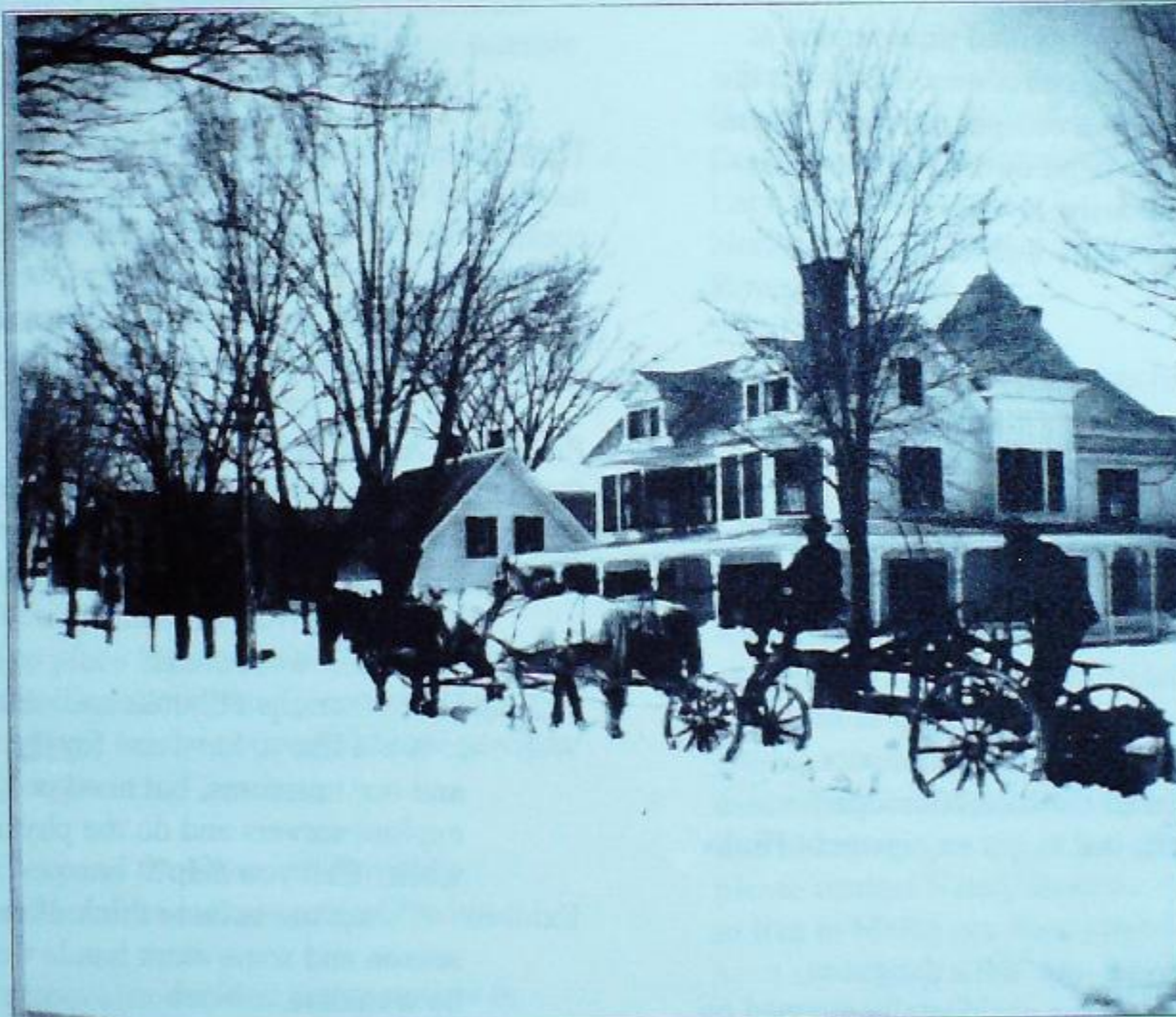
or by mail at 308 Foxcroft Center Road, Dover-Foxcroft, Me. 04426.

And, I want to give an especial thank you to Madelyn C. Betts for working so closely with me in maintaining an accurate and up-to-date mailing list.

Finally, if you hear a member complain he or she isn't receiving their *Conservators* please have them get in touch with me and we'll try to find out what the problem is.

I wish you all the happiest of holiday seasons.

Nancy Klimavicz Battick



Plowing snow on West Main Street. Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society collection.

A Message From Mary

We are again facing our winter season which is a time to relax and reflect. But work still goes on at the Historical Society as we continue cataloging and marking items. We have been lax in this regard, the major problem being time. The work is progressing nicely.

Madelyn Betts, the Society's Secretary since its beginning in the early 1960's, has given us her resignation effective in April at our annual meeting. She has been a real trooper all these years keeping impeccable minutes and membership records. Madelyn is one of a kind and regrets having to give up the job. She will still remain active and will continue to share her wealth of knowledge.

So this leaves a very important duty open. Anyone willing to take on this task? Please let me know.

As you know money is a serious issue with the Society in order to keep our two Museums open and continue our work. At our June meeting the members present voted unanimously to raise our annual dues from \$3 to \$5. This is our first increase since the Society was formed. It will help us pay for the printing and mailing of the *Shiretown Conserver*. Our dues still remain the lowest for any historical society in this area. We hope the increase does not cause a burden for any of our members and we trust you understand why it was necessary.

I send along a wish for a happy and healthy holiday season.

Mary Annis,
President, Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society

Membership Application & Donation Form

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Town/City: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Annual Dues (\$5.00 per person):\$ _____ Donation: \$ _____ (tax deductible)

Please make checks payable to: Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society. Mail to: 28 Orchard Road, Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426. Dues cover April 2004-April 2005. Please enclose a list of gift memberships and we'll notify your recipients.

The Dover-Foxcroft Historical Society, Inc.
28 Orchard Road
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426-3706

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 57
DOVER-FOXCROFT
ME.



Joy and mirth are in the air,
Christmas Cheer
is everywhere.

Accept my warmest greeting.

**From the Officers, Board of
Directors, and Conserver Staff of
the Dover-Foxcroft Historical
Society**

Happy Holidays!